

REMARKS

The Examiner's Action dated May 17, 2005, has been received, and its contents carefully noted.

Affirmation is hereby made of the election of claims 1-3 for examination on the merits in this application and, to advance matters, claims 4-6 have been cancelled and claims 1-3 have been replaced by new claims 7-11, drafted to more clearly define the contribution of the invention over the prior art. Applicant retains the right to submit a divisional application in order to seek examination of the non-elected method claims.

In response to the objection to claim 1, presented in Section 5 of the Action, claim 7 has been drafted to replace the language found objectionable by the recitation "wherein two of said reflecting means meet at a smooth boundary that is free of any step". The meaning of these limitations is believed to be readily apparent from the specification and drawing.

Fig. 1c shows two reflecting means 2bh and 2bp meeting at a smooth boundary. Fig. 6 shows two such means meeting at a step 102D. One of the features of the present invention is that it avoids the creation of such a step by forming the two reflecting means so that they meet at a smooth boundary. Thus, the recitations of "a smooth boundary" and that the boundary is "free of any step" defines the distinction between the structural relationship illustrated in Fig. 6 and that illustrated in Fig. 1(c).

A significant result of this difference is that it eliminates the presence of noticeable bright lines in the light emanating from the light guide plate. This feature of the invention is now defined in new claim 10, which

distinguishes over the prior art shown in Fig. 6 in terms of the resulting function.

New claim 11 further distinguishes over the prior art by specifying that the different kinds of reflecting means or disposed side-by-side on the bottom side of the plate, as is clearly evident from the drawings and the specification.

New claim 8 corresponds to original claim 3, which has been indicated to be allowable.

The rejection of claims 1 and 2 as anticipated by Shinji is respectfully traversed for the reason that the novel light source now defined in claims 7-11 is not disclosed in the applied reference.

New claim 7, similar to original claim 1, specifies that the guide plate is provided on its bottom side with a plurality of different kinds of reflecting means that form a reflection of surface. Contrary to the assertions presented in the action, Shinji does not disclose this structural feature. In the arrangement shown in Fig. 1a of Shinji, elements 3a and 3b are parts of a single reflection surface pattern that can have any one of the forms shown in Figs. 1b-1g. There is no disclosure in this reference that the different forms would be combined on a given plate. Element 7 is simply an air layer. That does not itself perform any reflecting function. Moreover, the air layer 7 does not form part of the bottom side of plate 3.

Thus, claim 7 clearly distinguishes patentably over the applied reference by its recitation that the plate of light-transmitting material has "a bottom side that comprises a plurality of different kinds of reflecting means that form a reflection surface", as well as by the recitation that "two of said reflecting means meet at a smooth boundary that is free

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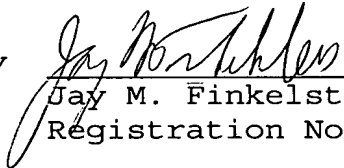
of any step." Claims 10 and 11 present additional limitations that are clearly not disclosed by the applied reference.

In view of the foregoing, it is requested that the prior art rejection presented in the previous action be reconsidered and withdrawn, that claims 7-11 be allowed and that the application be found in allowable condition.

If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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